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ADDRESS

*With affectionate respects of*

DELIVERED

*Henry Shippen*

BEFORE THE LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE,

AUGUST 27, 1840.

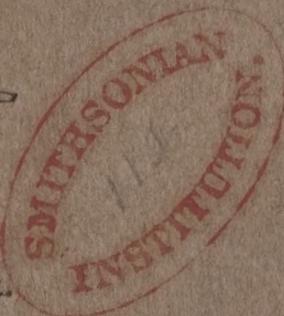
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PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETIES.

MEADVILLE:

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## ADDRESS.

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THERE is perhaps no period in your lives more interesting, than at that point when, after finishing a course of education, preparatory to the choice of a profession, and entering on the active pursuits of life, your minds are alternately expanded with high anticipations of success in the sphere in which you intend, or are destined, to move, and depressed by the apprehension of disappointment, as hope or fear may, for the time, be ascendant. You stand on, or near, the line, which will soon separate you from the parents or friends, who have nurtured you in your infancy, led you through that incipient state of learning, that, qualifying you for collegiate study, stores the mind with useful, practical knowledge, and enables you to assume a station for yourselves, wherein to develope and employ the faculties given you by nature, as they have been improved by culture; or you are about returning to the scenes and companions of your youth, and parting from the cherished associations of your riper years, and the kind instructors, who have zealously endeavored to teach you the road to usefulness and happiness, by storing your minds with the guides of religion and morality, and the principles of science. You must soon lose the staff on which you have rested for support, and with the world before you, stand ready to encounter its vicissitudes which will attend your course through life, trusting to your own efforts when friends and aid may be far away.

When entering upon a regular course of study, the minds of some are full of expectation of a successful career; they look to the commencement of a collegiate life, as of a pleasant journey, to its termination as a state of probation, and long for the time when they can set up for themselves, be up and doing. Others, when the time arrives, think it comes too soon—that too much remains to be learned—and feel reluctant to take what seems a premature, perilous leap into the unknown, unexplored scenes of the bustling world. The rushing recollections of the past, the forebodings of the future, the alternations of hopes and fears, bearing on one point of time, combine to make this an epoch of interest to yourselves; especially, when the mind turns from self, to the anx-

ious parents, friends and instructors, who have thus far conducted you from step to step, in what they deemed the true path to present and future welfare. No one can feel indifferent to the sensations which arise in their bosoms, when they stand on the shore, to witness your embarkation on a troubled sea, whence there may be no return, or a return without joy, with shipwrecked prospects, impaired reputation, and with all the pains and cost of education productive of no good results, or perhaps so thrown away, as to have made the return more painful than the absence.

But if, at the starting point, you are fearful of taking the first step, doubt your capacity for self-dependence, when you first view the impediments that obstruct your progress to fortune or fame, reflect on those who have fallen by the way, for want of strength to reach the goal, or judgment to ascertain the direction by which it was to be found. Reflection will summon and bring resolution in aid of your duties. You will look to those who have surmounted difficulties more formidable than you may have to encounter; become stimulated by example, and determined to reach your object. Or should you eagerly rush upon active life, with the full assurance of success, without seeing any impediments, anticipating no adverses;—or guarding against contingencies, but confident in your own resources, move forward as if you felt conscious of the influence of an auspicious star, there are the same inherent incentives to action; there are implanted principles, operating to the same end, by varied impulses, and different means. What they are, and how they operate, can best be known and felt, when you shall have experienced the anxious solicitude of a parent, instructor, or guardian, in watching the conduct of a child, a pupil, or a ward; you can now only imagine what feelings must cluster around the heart in such relations; but by supposing them to exist in yourselves, you will easily estimate the duties you owe to those who fill such relations towards you.

At your request, and with much pleasure on my part, I am, for the occasion placed in a position, which authorises me to assume the relation of a friend, and as such to speak to and address you, as young men about to become active members of the great society of man—as a portion of the rising generation, on whom the hopes of the country must ultimately rest, and, as I trust, who will contribute to its lasting welfare, no small measure of faithful service, guided by talents cultivated with care, and exerted with laudable zeal.

The occasion and place of our meeting is, to me at least, one of manifold interest; here I began my course of active life, and after near forty years of residence elsewhere, hither I return to end it, unless those who can direct in what place my duties shall be performed, shall deem fit to order otherwise; here I found many friends in early manhood, some yet remain, and by the descendants of those who have passed away, it does not seem to be considered that a mere stranger has come among them. Nor are you warranted in looking on me as a stranger in interest to the institution, to which you have been, or may remain attached, or to those who have received their education within it. To find a flourishing college, where but a declining school once existed; to see a seat of learning, where, within the memory of some now present, the savage roamed for prey; to feel assured that those, who have been the means of its resuscitation, will save it from further relapse, and that the character of the youth who leave it, will greatly tend to the continuance and increase of its prosperous condition, is as cheering to me as to any one who hears me. Could I be insensible to these considerations, there is another which could not fail to be impressive; by the kindness of those to whom the superintendence of the institution is entrusted, its highest honors have been awarded to me; they were gratefully accepted, and the more cherished by a reference to those by whom the award was made. The old friends of other days, their descendants, and the members of a religious society, whose pious zeal in the cause of learning, has not only revived our own college, but in another part of the state, has restored more than its ancient splendor to one of the oldest literary institutions among us, after successive retrogressions. Such an honor, flowing from those near and dear to me, is the more valued as its source is the nearer home; and in looking at every thing around me, with a retrospect to the last forty years, I may safely say that could the same recollections crowd on your mind, as do on mine, you would assuredly be convinced that this occasion and this presence are impressed upon me with no ordinary emotions.

In reminding you of your duties for accomplishing the purposes of your education, there can be no place more appropriate than this, and, by recurring to the past condition of the country around us, in contrast with what it now is, you will be reminded of what are the good effects of the enterprise, courage and industry of a few men, who redeemed it from its savage state. It is only fifty-three years, since this place was

twenty-five miles in advance of the most western military station in possession of the United States, and one of the soldiers who assisted in its construction, the donor of the ground where the college stands, is yet among us; and it is less than fifty years, since the venerable patriarch of our beautiful valley, was taken prisoner by the Indians within our present view. He yet survives as a worthy pattern of the hardy pioneer, in promoting the happiness of all around him in the perilous days of other times; in his time he has seen the line between civilization and barbarism, extended from the banks of the Susquehanna, to the fair and far west beyond the Mississippi, how far none can tell. In his time, few Americans resided within that broadly expanded territory, now it teems with millions, increasing with every passing moment; he has seen it a wilderness, now it is almost as a continued garden, with intervening forests, which are fast disappearing before the indomitable industry of an active population. Let these be subjects of your steady contemplation; look here, and there, and every where, through the vast region for a field, wherein you may become as useful in the improvement and perfection of the great work, which the uneducated pioneers of your country have began, and carried beyond expectation, or even imagination, of what could be done. With advantages which they had not, imitate their example by making as good an use of the means which you possess, as they did of what was in their power, then you will find in the swelling resources of your country, abundant room and subjects on which to display your talents; apply your knowledge and industry so as to meet the highest expectation of all who are interested in your welfare, or that of our common country. Something can be effected by each of you in your respective spheres of action; and though it may not be great, your separate productions, carried into one account with your country, may make it largely a debtor to the joint concern.

You are more numerous than the first settlers on French Creek; do as much as they have done for their country, and your friends will ask, or can wish, no more.

The great object of your education, has been to learn you how to fulfil your mission, to acquire such knowledge as will enable you to do it, and in what manner you can apply it so as to produce the desired effect; learned as you may be, well instructed as you have been, it has been rather in the seclusion of the college, than on the public theatre on which you are about to become actors, as I hope and trust, of celebrity

and usefulness. With varied talents, and different objects of immediate pursuit, your efforts will be directed to one common end, act as you will, by means as unconnected as your occupations, you will yet act upon the same impulse, by the same principles of duty to God, man and society, according to the course which nature prompts, instruction has taught, or inclination shaped. It varies with the varied mind, still pointing in the same direction, to individual happiness, public usefulness, the approbation of friends, and the accomplishment of their hopes.

How these objects are to be attained, is a subject of serious reflection, at every stage of life in which you are placed. To those of you who are now closing your general course of education, and selecting one more appropriate to some peculiar occupation, it is most important to well examine yourselves, in order to find out that which is most congenial to your turn of mind, the best adapted to unite capacity of attaining what is desired, with the inclination to pursue it by the necessary means. To those who yet remain to complete such a course of education as is useful in all pursuits, it matters less that they devote their attention more to one branch than another. Till the time for the choice of an occupation arrives, it is better to cultivate the mind as a garden capable of producing every varied product, by the proper preparation of the ground, in which the root is to be planted, or the seed sown. The young gardener will soon discover the nature of the soil, its productions, with the proper means of adapting it to the growth of all those varieties of herb, plant, flower, vegetable and fruit, which are suited to his wants, his profit, or pleasure. It is time to prepare for some particular culture, when by his own self-examination, or by accident, he has fixed on his course of husbandry; but in the mean time, every student, from the youngest to the oldest, should keep in mind the beautifully instructive fable of Æsop, about the husbandman who, on his death bed, told his sons, that he had left them a great mass of gold buried under ground in his vineyard, but did not remember the particular place where it was hidden. The sons turned up all the vineyard with their spades; gold indeed they found none, but by reason of their stirring and digging the mould about the roots of the vines, they had a great vintage the year following. Bear it then in remembrance, that your duty to the Deity, who has planted a vineyard within you, is to cultivate it so as to second his beneficent purpose; that you owe it to those who have made you an advancement in life, or

left you an inheritance in a good education, that you turn it to such account as will fill their expectations if alive, or as you may be convinced would console them in their last moments, if assured that their designs would be accomplished. Remember, too, that as a member of the community in which you may be located, you enjoy the benefits of association, of social intercourse among those you are to derive your support, by whose confidence and assistance your objects can alone be effected; who in performing their obligations towards you, have a right to demand a concomitant compliance with yours. In the circle of society, whether large or small, each one has an appropriate station and pursuit, but the interests and welfare of all are mutually dependent; each aids the other by the exchange of the surplus of the one, to supply the wants of another; some labor with the body, others with the mind; the products of all are for sale, or barter, or subjects of exchange, whether for money, for money's worth, or compensation for public service. There is no calling in life, in which man must not depend on man, or can be absolved from the imperious duty of contributing to the common welfare his due proportion of bodily or mental labor. Nor is this the last or least of our obligations; every man owes to himself such a degree of self respect, as will keep him in good humor with himself, to feel at least self approbation in his conduct to others, so as to enjoy that internal repose of mind, which results from the consciousness that he has endeavored to meet the just requisitions of society upon the position which he occupies.

Some of you have fixed upon the immediate object of your future occupation; others perhaps are waiting for some internal movement or external occurrence, to direct their choice; let me advise you to choose that, for which you feel the assurance of the capacity of attaining distinction and public usefulness, by means which will not make it an up hill work, in laboring in one direction, while the bend of your mind is in a different course. Take that in which you feel confident of being able to mix the most private enjoyment with the highest degree of public good. Indulge, and freely indulge, the first promptings of nascent ambition, to fill to the brim the full measure of your position; let your steps be guided by that laudable pride, which in reference to yourselves or society, springs from the resolution to effect useful ends by worthy means. If wealth is your aim, it is sure to follow industry, honesty, and method in applying the knowledge already obtained; if you seek distinction in your calling, the same means

will secure it; or if public approbation is the ruling passion, you have only to act well the part assigned you to obtain the only popularity worth the possession—that which follows the fulfilment of our duties.

It is the duty of every member of society, to be in some way useful to others, to endeavor to add something to the common stock, to so mark his path through life, as to leave some trace of what he had done for the public good; let his position be what it may, whether in a profession, or trade, or other employment, every man can do something for himself, which benefits the public. Human happiness consists not in the acquisition of wealth, honor, fame, or the amount of either; the desire of accumulating the former beyond the means of rational enjoyment for the present, and wise provision for the future, is never gratified; ask the *millionaire* how much will suffice him, he will answer something more; and however much it may be, he will never have enough, or enjoy with content what he has. Go to the man who has power over his fellow man; ask him if he has enough, if he is content with that portion which the constitution and laws of the country have conferred upon him; few will be found content with the share distributed to them; others will have too much, they too little, and they will think themselves its safest depository and administrator. Go to the man, around whose head some of the honors of a state or a nation are gathered; he looks among his equals with jealousy, to his superiors with envy, and should he reach the highest station, he will find that he who is in a great place, has need to borrow other men's opinion, to make himself happy. The thirst for any other fame than that which follows useful actions is never sated; that which is sought by the arts of empiricism in science, or imposture in policy, is felt to be baseless; and conscious of its airy, fleeting nature, the possessor seeks to condense the cloud which throws a false halo around him, by new arts and practices, to continue popular delusion by eliciting popular applause.

True fame, which consists in public approbation, flowing spontaneously from the free assent, and inward belief of the wise and good, that it has been merited by the promotion of the interest of the community; as it follows only on meritorious conduct, he who enjoys it never desires to add to it on trust, but willing that services should precede rewards, he stretches his faculties to the snapping point, to perform the first, well assured that the latter will sooner or later follow in the wake. The laborer may not receive his hire here, but it is sure to

come hereafter; and though he may not receive his fame among those whom he has served, he may repose in the hope of being elsewhere accepted, as a well done, good and faithful servant. Let then public usefulness be the great aim of your conduct towards man; it will teach and lead you in the path to happiness here and hereafter, it will surround you with the solid enjoyments of life; the hope of effecting something that will better the condition of others, will cheer you in your progress from youth through manhood, while the consciousness of its accomplishment, will be a pure source of solace in old age.

You have therefore prepared for the race, over whatever ground may be chosen, by or for you; you have now come to the place where you see the direction of the course; are now at the starting point, with an allotted field before you; and though you may not want, you will not be the worse for the further advice of a friend, who has had his own row to hoe through a rough field, and a chequered life somewhat prolonged. Look about you, examine yourself well; you know not who or what is to enter into competition with, or opposition to you; prepare for success, provide against danger; your stock of knowledge is your first dependence, its proper quantum and application to the intended object is the next. You should look well to the source whence it is to be acquired, as well as the means of its acquisition; seek it in the fountain, rather than the rivulet; "in nature as viewed in her works," "as the mirror of art," and not in prospect as "from some high turret afar off," as is commonly done, "whereby we are taken up with generalities." "Whereas we should depend and approach nearer to particulars, and more exactly and confidently look into *things*, that thereby there might be made a more true and profitable discovery"—of what is sought, as well as what endangers the pursuit. "And this certainly may be averred for truth, that they be not the highest instances that give the best and surest information. This is not unaptly expressed in the tale so common, of the Philosopher, that while he gazed upward to the stars, fell into the water; for if he had looked down, he might have seen the stars in the water, but in looking up to heaven, he could not see the water in the stars." "In like manner it often comes to pass, that small and mean things conduce more to the discovery of great matters, than great things to the discovery of small matters; and therefore Aristotle notes well, that the nature of every thing is best seen in its smallest portions. For that cause he inquires the nature

of a commonwealth, first in a family, in the simple congregations of society, man and wife, parent and children, master and servant, which are in every cottage. So likewise the nature of this great City of the world, and the policy thereof, must be sought in every first concordance, and least portions of things. So we see that fact of nature, (esteemed one of the great mysteries,) of the turning of iron, toucht with a load-stone, towards the poles, was found out in *needles* of iron, not in *bars* of iron." So in Holy Writ, we are taught to look to small things as composing the greatest; even the kingdom of heaven is compared to a grain of mustard seed, not to an acorn or nut, but to the least of grain; but it hath in it the property and spirit hastily to get up and spread, and it may not be irreverently taken as a lesson in all things to man, to resort to means however small or insignificant at first view, in performing his obligations. Take those which are best calculated, in their known effects and operation, to spring up the soonest, grow the fastest, spread the widest, multiply the most, and best fructify the field you cultivate, whether by the labors of the mind or the body. Look well to the small grains of human happiness, the aggregate will make up itself, as the old maxim well teaches us, take care of the penny, the pound will take care of itself. All great things have small beginnings. Families enlarge to villages—thence grow towns, cities, states, nations; would you truly understand the policy of swelling them from the one to the other, trace them to the germ, the root; would you know the laws of nature, trace them back from their most splendid developements, to their primary movements, and if you find truth there, "the voice of nature will cry it up, though the voice of man should cry it down." It better suits and gratifies the pride of man, to rather incline from the path of nature than to follow it, to endeavor rather to ascribe an act, an invention, or discovery, to his own genius, than to the law or the light of nature and its works; hence it ever has been, yet is, and ever will be, a but too common endeavor to substitute in their place, the speculations of theorists. But "that which is referred to truth, is more than that which is referred to opinion," hence "error both proceeded from too great a reverence, and a kind of adoration of the mind and understanding of man, by means whereof, men have withdrawn too much from the contemplation of nature and the observations of experience; and have tumbled up and down in their own speculations and conceits, but of these surpassing opinionators and intellectualists, who

are notwithstanding taken for the most sublime and divine Philosophers, it was justly said, "Men seek truth in their own little world, and not the great common world, for they disdain the alphabet of nature, and the prime book of divine works, which if they did not, they might perchance by degrees and leisure, after the knowledge of simple letters and spelling of syllables, come at last to read perfectly the text and volume of the creation. But they contrarywise by continual meditation and agitation of wit, urge and as it were invocate their own spirits to divine, and give oracles unto them, whereby they are deservedly and pleasingly deluded. Men oftentimes imbue and infect their meditations and doctrines, with the infusions of some opinions and conceptions of their own which they have most admired, or some science to which they have most applied themselves, giving all things a dye and tincture, though very deceivable from these favorite studies."

"For why should we erect unto ourselves some few authors to stand like the pillars of Hercules, beyond which there should be no discovery of knowledge, or seeing that 'there is no end of their making books, and that much reading is a weariness to the flesh,' without profiting the mind, unless it be of such 'books as are of the right kind,' that as the serpent of Moses may devour the serpents of impostors, why surcharge ourselves with too much reading, too many books, or look to mere opinions for 'the truths of nature which doat upon their understanding with a direct beam of light, according to its own laws and not the law of words or the opinions of man.'

"The substance of matter is better than the beauty of words, the vanity of matter is more odious than the vanity of words; even good and sound knowledge, often putrifies and dissolves into subtle idle questions, which are of no solid use; and too much learning may subject us to the mockery of the old woman in *A&esop*, 'who conceited that by doubling her measure of barley, her hen would daily lay her two eggs. But the hen grew fat and laid none.' So of the Schoolmen 'who were ignorant of the history either of nature or of time, spun out of no great quantity of matter, but with infinite agitation of wit and fancy, laborious webs of degenerate learning, working upon itself as the spider works his web which is endless, and brought forth cobwebs of learning, admirable indeed for fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit.'

But when the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter by contemplating nature and the works of God, works according to the stuff, and is limited thereby; avoiding "a heap and mass of words to give men countenance, that those who have the terms of art, might be thought to understand the arts themselves," avoiding also the collections of the Schoolmen, "which are like a fripper's or broker's shop, that hath ends of every thing, but nothing of worth."

Do not give too ready credence to, or pin your faith upon the sleeves of those, who affect to throw a veil of mystery over the sources of knowledge, or the springs of science; there are as to some branches, men who assume to give the rules and principles, on which alone you can find the key to unlock those mysteries which they may have created, or the thread to guide you through a labyrinth existing perhaps only in their fancy, in order to make themselves the pillars of the science. Such as those who profess to know the mystery of the science of government, political economy or national wealth; trust them not, if when you go back to their elements, you find their principles are not based on the grain of mustard seed, but rest on the conceit of some opinionative intellectualist. In the mustard seed, is the germ of truth, in the speculations of the philosopher, there is error. You can as well understand the nature of the first concordance of society in a family, in its domestic and social relations which lead to the government of a nation, or the properties of that seed whence springs its future wealth, goodness, and glory, as the most sublime of philosophers. Though they go to the ocean, take you the mustard seed; the smallest beginning will have the broadest end.

The true road to knowledge consists in the inquiry of causes, and the production of effects; the one searches "the mines and caves where nature lies hid," the other fashions it as it were upon the anvil; "art and human industry do not command and rule, but serve and administer to its operations, and nothing can so much conduce to drawing down from heaven, as it were, a whole shower of new and profitable inventions for the use of men," as the intent solicitude to do or discover something, which shall tend to supply the wants, or increase the comforts of the society wherein you move. If it is in a small town, know how to make it a greater one. So in states or nations; if you have but a grain to contribute, let it be of the true seed, that hath healthful properties of growth and increase. The practice of an useful art or science, or the invention or discovery

of a new one, should be a primary aim. You may invent by reflection, experiment and deep study into the recesses of nature; but you may discover from the observation of matter, animate or inanimate, things which may effect the greatest changes. Watch the motions of a fish, you see the discovery of navigation; its fins and tail taught man the use of oars to propel, and rudders to steer; you can trace the steam engine to the spout of a tea kettle, artillery to the flying up of a pot lid, and fire to the accidental striking of stone with iron.

It is well said by the great disciple of nature, that in the medicinal use of dittany, "we are more beholden to a wild goat for chirurgery, or to a nightingale for the modulations of music," and to say in a word, to chance or any thing else more than to *logique*. Neither is the form or method of invention much other, than what beasts are capable of, and often put in use. Who or what "taught the raven in a drought, to throw pebbles into a hollow tree where by chance she spied water, that the water might rise so as she might come to it? What taught the bee to sail through such a vast sea of air, to the flowers in the wilds, to find the way so far off to his hive again? Who taught the ant to bite every grain of corn that she buries in the hill, lest it should take root and grow, and so delude her hope?"—Chance, accident, nature, instinct, *providence*—not philosophy. I trust there is no one among you to whom it need be said—"Go to the ant thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise, which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest."

Thus moved, thus guided, you are sure to be right at the first step, then go ahead, without, like Atalanta, losing the race by the allurement of a golden apple. In the choice of their occupation, young men are too apt to consider that there are grades in society, depending on the nature of the employment of its different members; thus the learned professions, as they are called, of Divinity, Law, and Physic, rank higher in public estimation, than the mechanic or useful arts, as objects of pursuit. This is an opinion but too common both with the old and young. There is within us a latent, an almost indomitable spirit of false pride, that leads us to inquire into the stock from which our neighbors and their children have sprung, as we would into the breed of their horses, cattle, sheep or swine, professing to be republicans in grain, protesting against the existence of even a lurking remnant of the pride of ancestry in our bosoms, it is yet there. We are too

apt to indulge its workings within, and are often obliged to suppress its stubborn ebullition from appearing without. We do not estimate the man, in proportion alone to the height which he has reached by his own unaided exertions, but, by a most perverse standard of estimation, often place him below one who has not risen beyond the grade of his father, or has sunk below it. In awarding homage to the statesman, the divine, the lawyer, the physician, the political or judicial officers of the government, in preference to the mechanic, the tradesman or merchant, merely from the nature of their employment, we apply a standard which will stand the test of neither reason or public utility. The true scale by which to measure all of them, is by the works which follow their labors. The workman is known by his chips, the tree by its fruit; and as its effects are healthful to the soul, or the body, as our rights are ably, honestly, and skilfully asserted or defended, good laws adopted, truly expounded, justly administered in their application, the one is entitled to precedence over another, in the same proportion as labors of the mind have added to the general stock of public good. So should the labors of the body be measured, and the mechanic be held to out-rank the statesmen who administer the government of the people, if he has produced results more beneficial to their interests, and in spite of the perverted pride of our nature, the universal expression of public opinion, has assigned to the mechanic arts their just position in the grades of science, and to the inventors of useful mechanism, or improvements therein, the true rank to which they are entitled in the estimation of their country and their countrymen.

As a nation, we give the highest praise to those who have achieved the greatest benefits; in the award of its highest offices and honors, we never look to the pedigree of the candidate, incumbent, or recipient; and the time is not distant, when no one will inquire who the public benefactor once was, from whom he descended, what was his own, or the calling of his father, but as individuals, all will unite in giving honor to whom honor is due, with no other respect to grade or fancied rank in society, than is the merited meed of their works.

In the ancient nations of the heathen world, it was the highest degree of honor to attain an apotheosis, or be translated among the gods; especially when it was given, not "by a formal decree or act of estate, (as was used among the the Roman emperors,) but freely by the assent of men and inward belief, of which high honor there was a certain degree and middle term.

For there were reckoned above human honors, honors heroic and divine, in the distribution whereof antiquity observed this order: Founders of States, lawgivers, extirpators of tyrants, *fathers of their country*, and other eminent persons in civil merit, were honored with the title of worthies only, or demigods; on the other side, such as were the authors and inventors of new arts, and such as endowed man's life with new commodities and accessions, were ever consecrated among the greater or entire gods," which Lord Bacon says was done justly, and upon sound judgment. "For the merits of the former are commonly confined within the circle of an age or nation, and are not unlike seasonable and favoring showers, which, though they be profitable and desirable, yet save but for that season only wherein they fall, or for a latitude of ground which they water; but the benefits of the latter, like the influence of the sun and the heavenly bodies, are for time permanent, for place universal; those again are commonly mixed with strife and perturbation, but these have the true character of divine presence, and come with a gentle breath, without noise or agitation."

The most ancient nations paid no regard to the manner of invention or discovery in the arts. Hence they who discourse of the first inventors of things, and the original of the sciences, have celebrated rather chance than art, and have brought in beasts, birds, fishes, and serpents, rather than men, as the first doctors of sciences. So that it was no *mavaille*, (the manner of antiquity being to consecrate the inventors of profitable things,) that the Egyptians, to whom many arts owe their first beginnings, had their temples full of the idols of beasts, but almost empty of the idols of men.

If then the wisest nations of antiquity have deified inventors, whether man or beast, or the invention was the effect of chance or art, while the founders of States were only half gods and half men, we cannot err by considering them as on a level. Much as we may respect the fathers of our country, who carried it through the perils of the revolution, and the confusion which followed, till they placed it on the rock on which it now rests, it is not to them alone that we are to ascribe our perfect greatness. In our progress from dependent colonies to independent states, first connected by the feeble ties of the confederation, and since united by the more perfect union under the constitution; more public benefits have flowed upon the country by inventions and discoveries in the mechanic arts and practical sciences, than the whole legislation of

Congress unconnected with them, has produced. If you think this a bold assertion, look to the south and southwest sections of the country for the effects of the invention of the cotton gin, in the increased population, wealth and resources of an immense territory, and then ask, what would have been its condition now, if that invention had not been made. Extend your vision over and across the Atlantic, to the commercial cities of the old world, and cotton fills your eye as the great staple article of commerce; go to the work-shops of Europe and these states, you find cotton the material for the manufacture of almost countless millions of clothing, and then ask yourselves, does that man live who would not deem a life well spent, who had made himself worthy of being placed on a level with Eli Whitney. Look, too, to the inventions of Oliver Evans and Robert Fulton, and to the mighty consequences which these inventions have produced in commerce and intercourse foreign and domestic, and are producing in naval warfare, is there one of you who would not feel that the measure of your ambition was full to overflowing, and your highest aspirations for fame most abundantly gratified, if you should live to see the day when your name would be united with them, as a public benefactor by your mechanical inventions. And even if public opinion should award to you only posthumous justice, after a life of persecuting litigation, as was the fate of those great men, you will leave to your children a brighter and more enduring inheritance than fleeting wealth or recorded honors, for you will have deserved well of your country, by earning that for which all aspire, public praise.

But let not the fate of these eminent mechanics, deter you from the pursuit of those arts to which your inclinations lead you; though impostors may have their day, and public justice is awarded slowly to inventors, yet time never fails to bring it about, when the novelty of the invention is acknowledged, and the utility of its application tested by experience; and when public honors are once bestowed upon the mechanic, they are never lost. Unlike the statesmen, or the high political officers of the government, who find "the stairs to honor steep, the standing slippery, the regress a downfall," the mechanic needs no bulwark in patronage, his standing is impregnable, there is no regress from the position he occupies, no downfall to his honors, no "farewell to his greatness," which is as durable as his inventions, there is no limit to the space to which his name is known in his works, his honors are "as to time, permanent, as to place, universal."

Alexander was envious of the great good fortune of Achilles in this, that he had so good a trumpet of his actions and prowess, in the verses of Homer; but the cotton gin in its every motion, the paddle wheels of every steam boat, and every puff from a locomotive engine, will through all time, trumpet forth and perpetuate the memory of Whitney, Evans, and Fulton, without the aid of the least, still less the greatest of poets. Their works are their own best trumpeters, their fame will be immortal as the benefits they have conferred on mankind, and proclaimed in every land by every tongue, where the useful arts are cherished.

It has been most truly said, that he is a public benefactor who causes two blades of grass to grow, where one grew before, what then is that mechanic who has imparted to his country benefits of incalculable magnitude in increased production at diminished expense, with facilities of transportation and intercommunication between states and nations by achieving a conquest over time and space, the current of the mightiest rivers, and the storms of the ocean.

It will be too tedious to refer to the numerous inventors, who have largely contributed to the wealth and prosperity of the country, by inventions worthy of all praise; it would be invidious to name some and omit others of equal merit, especially the living, but there are two other sons of Pennsylvania, who have achieved a greater conquest over a more powerful, a more stubborn, more unyielding adversary, than this country ever encountered on the land or the water. The inflated, boastful pride of Europe, the arrogantly assumed, asserted superiority over us, in the progress of the useful arts and sciences, their relative perfection and useful application in the two countries, has been humbled before the locomotive engines of William Norris and Matthias W. Baldwin.—They traverse the rail roads of Austria, and of even haughty England, unrivalled in construction, in speed, and power, by the best productions of its most skilful artizans. How changed is her policy since her prime minister declared, that not a horse-shoe or a hob-nail should be made in their colonies, since her iron-masters and iron-mongers complained to Parliament, “That the inhabitants of New England make a great deal of bar iron, manufacture it into axes, nails, and sundry other species, and do now not only supply themselves with great quantities of nails and iron ware, but export great quantities to many other of His Majesty’s plantations, to the great decay and prejudice of the iron trade of this kingdom,”

and Parliament by a solemn act, declared rolling and slitting mills, plating forges to work with a tilt hammer, and furnaces for making steel, "to be a common nuisance to be abated by the Governor within thirty days after information given."

And can it be, that an American Engine, which in 1750 would have been a common nuisance to the mother country, though located in the colonies, should be imported from Pennsylvania in 1840, to supersede the boasted productions of English art, skill and genius, on English ground? It is true, though strange to those who have been inattentive observers of the rapid progression of our artisans, in outstripping those of Europe in those inventions and improvements which exalt a nation by making the people prosperous and happy. It has long been foreseen by those who have looked to the perfection of our manufactures, that they would become articles of export to that country, whence they were but a few years since imported, whenever its policy would permit; it may be safely asserted, that no other reason than policy, prevents the importation of articles of our manufactures, other than locomotive engines, nor can it be doubted that the time is near, when every rail road in Europe, will be supplied with engines of American manufacture, or those patterned from them. And does not the present reality, combined with the future prospect, excite a truly national pride, at this splendid triumph over the settled prejudice, the inveterate unbending policy, and haughty spirit of the greatest nation of the old world; is there one in this assembly who does not wish that himself or his son was the conqueror in this trial of genius and skill, or who would not rather enjoy the honor of being a more eminent mechanic than any in Europe, than being the most distinguished warrior or statesman of the day?

It is not in the construction of Engines alone, that our mechanics are triumphant. The late Sultan of Turkey sought a master ship carpenter, not among the subjects of the favored mistress of the sea, or any of her European competitors, or aspirants to its dominion; he sent here for the best workman of his age, to build the ship which was to bear his name. The Emperor of Austria, following and profiting by his example, overlooked all the artisans of Europe, by selecting one of our own; the capitalists of England sent next, the Autocrat of Russia has made his requisition, and other crowned heads may ere this, have accorded homage to American mechanics. Who is there who would not feel honored in representing this nation at the court of the Sultan or an Emperor, but who was

the most honored by the one, when the Mahmouda was launched, or by the other, when the engine moved?—the American mechanic by whom the honor was earned, or the American minister on whom it was reflected?—and who is there among you, that would not have been, if you could, the Eckford at the one court, or the Norris at the other? They strove for empire in the world of their respective arts, success attended their efforts; one did not long survive his triumph, the other has returned to enjoy his—to impart its benefit to his country, and teach his countrymen the most useful of all practical lessons: that in their mechanical skill, industry, and inventive genius, there consists the most solid foundation for individual, as well as national greatness. With such men for examples to imitate, for guides to follow, no one should feel debased by such occupations as made them the benefactors of the old and new world. No member of a learned profession, no statesman or jurist, is put in requisition for employment in Europe; their works are seldom if ever sought for instruction, or adopted as improvements in their respective branches of knowledge, for few, very few are admitted by Europeans to have added to the common stock, though here their merit is acknowledged. You need, however, not be mechanics in order to become inventors; though inventions are, if not more, as often the effect of chance, accident or instinct, as the result of scientific investigation, or deep study to find out something new and useful, yet it is well for all to be on the look out, for inventing some improvement on what is known, for making some new development or application of old principles for discovering some qualities in matter, or some effects from its motion. No one knows till he tries, what may be the result of the close observation of nature, her works, and mode of working, of “experiment upon experiment, from experiment to axioms,” from axioms again to new experiments. You may fail in finding the thing sought, yet usefully develope something else, as the alchymists, who could not turn other metals into gold, “have brought to light a great number of fruitful experiments; as well for the disclosure of nature, as the use of man’s life.” It cannot be said “that Prometheus applied his contemplation on set purpose to the invention of fire, or that when he first struck the flint he expected sparks;” nor that the use of artillery was the object of the experiment that led to it, or that it would have been known, “if the pot lid of that chemic monk (Roger Bacon) had not, by flying open, and being tost up in the air, instructed him,” but that both fell upon the experi-

ment by chance. Others again become inventors by a most intent solicitude about some one thing, and a watchfulness to discover it—of which a striking instance is said to have lately occurred in Pittsburgh. It was a desideratum in casting chilled rollers, that the metal in entering the mould should have a rotary motion in order to throw the impurities to the centre. A young man hired in a foundry was intent upon the discovery, and attained it, by noticing the flowing of water from a hydrant into a bucket, so as to strike the side at an angle to its axis. Another instance has occurred here, in the invention of the art of making paper from straw, by a worthy neighbor, who observing that the straw at the bottom of a tub of leached ashes, resembled rags or the stock for making paper, made it convertible into paper by extracting the acid from the straw.

These and other countless inventions or discoveries, have been too lightly accounted; though they are but as mustard seed, they have produced much; though they may be but slender twigs, or the smallest sticks which compose the bundle of faggots of the old man referred to in a fable of *Æsop*, their united effect when bound together, has mainly caused and will perpetuate the greatness of our common country, and its prosperous growth from small beginnings.

I cannot better close this address, than by advising you, and each of you, to so act your allotted parts in life, that you will become one of such sticks, so that by being accounted parts of the great bundle which constitutes the strength of the nation, you will inscribe your names on the roll of public benefactors.

May prosperity attend you.









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